

The Great Falls is the second largest waterfall on the East Coast, and attracts visitors from within and outside of New Jersey.

Paterson Great Falls is also an educational tool for New Jersey's children. Students young and old travel to Paterson Great Falls to witness its natural splendor, to learn about the industrial revolution, and the pioneers who helped build our Nation.

This area is truly a valuable asset to the State of New Jersey, and I feel it is only proper to share this wonderful resource with the entire nation by establishing the Paterson Great Falls as a unit of the National Park Service, NPS.

The Federal Government has already acknowledged the significance of Great Falls, by designating the area a national historic landmark. Establishing it as a unit of the NPS would increase the presence Great Falls, and the NPS would provide staff and tours, and allow for a better, more educational interpretation of the site.

This designation is warranted. Our Nation's urban history is currently under-represented by the NPS. Not many sites tell the story of the growth of our Nation and its economy from that of agrarian to industrial. Other than Lowell, Massachusetts, a one-time industry powerhouse whose historic district was designated a national park, I am not aware of another NPS site which represents our Nation's rich urban history.

My legislation would take the first step towards this important designation by directing the NPS to study the feasibility of establishing a national park at the Paterson Great Falls area. I ask that my colleagues join me in support of this worthy effort, so that a critical chapter in the story of our nation may be told to future generations.

SENATE RESOLUTIONS

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 15—TO DESIGNATE A NATIONAL DAY OF RECONCILIATION

Mr. BROWNBACK submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

S. CON. RES. 15

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That on a date to be determined by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate, the Chaplain of the House of Representatives and the Chaplain of the Senate shall conduct a joint assembly, to be conducted in the House Chamber, in which Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate will be able to express the past struggles that we as a Nation have experienced, overcome, and still struggle with, and thereby lead the Nation in beginning the process of reconciliation.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 16—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT THE GEORGE WASHINGTON LETTER TO TOURO SYNAGOGUE IN NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND, WHICH IS ON DISPLAY AT THE B'NAI B'RITH KLUTZNICK NATIONAL JEWISH MUSEUM IN WASHINGTON, D.C., IS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT EARLY STATEMENTS BUTTRESSING THE NASCENT AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

Mr. CHAFEE (for himself and Mr. REED) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

S. CON. RES. 16

Whereas George Washington responded to a letter sent by Moses Seixas, warden of Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, in August 1790;

Whereas, although Touro Synagogue, the oldest Jewish house of worship in the United States, and now a national historic site, was dedicated in December 1763, Jewish families had been in Newport for over 100 years before that date;

Whereas these Jews, some of whom were Marranos, came to the United States with hopes of starting a new life in this country, where they could practice their religious beliefs freely and without persecution;

Whereas they were drawn to the Colony of Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations because of Governor Roger Williams' assurances of religious liberty;

Whereas the letter from Touro Synagogue is the most famous of many congratulatory notes addressed to the new president by American Jewish congregations;

Whereas Seixas articulated the following principle, which Washington repeated in his letter: "For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance; requires only that they who live under its protection, should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support";

Whereas this was the first statement of such a principle enunciated by a leader of the new United States Government;

Whereas this principle has become the cornerstone of United States religious and ethnic toleration as it has developed during the past two centuries;

Whereas the original letter is on display as part of the permanent collection of the B'nai B'rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C.; and

Whereas Americans of all religious faiths gather at Touro Synagogue each August on the anniversary of the date of the letter's delivery and at the Klutznick Museum on George Washington's birthday to hear readings of the letter and to discuss how the letter's message can be applied to contemporary challenges: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the George Washington letter to Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, in August 1790, which is on display as part of the permanent collection of the B'nai B'rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C., is one of the most significant early statements buttressing the nascent

American constitutional guarantee of religious freedom; and

(2) the text of the George Washington letter should be widely circulated, serving as an important tool for teaching tolerance to children and adults alike.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleague from Rhode Island, Senator CHAFEE, in introducing a resolution commemorating the letter sent by President George Washington to Touro Synagogue in Newport Rhode Island, the oldest Jewish house of worship in the United States.

When Roger Williams came to Rhode Island in the 1630s, an individual's right to worship without government interference was unknown in other colonies or countries of the world. He made religious tolerance the core principle of his new settlement, and it became a beacon of hope for those suffering from persecution.

By the middle of the 17th century, 15 Jewish families, who knew the pain of intolerance firsthand, arrived in Newport to reclaim their faith and rebuild their lives. This group included Jews from Spain and Portugal who had been forced to become Christian converts to escape persecution. Rhode Island's lively experiment promised a new beginning.

The 18th century saw many steps toward the realization of this promise, as increasing trade and religious tolerance spurred the growth of Newport and its Jewish community. By 1759, with about 75 families totaling some 300 people, the Congregation turned to the construction of a permanent house of worship. Four years later, this Synagogue was dedicated in a service led by Reverend Isaac Touro, the spiritual leader of the Congregation.

As this country's first President, George Washington was the leader of a nation still crafting its ideals and identity. Although the new Constitution had won ratification, many Americans feared that its concentration of power in a federal government threatened the individual liberties for which they had so recently gone to war. To alleviate these fears, Washington began a nationwide tour in support of a Bill of Rights that would explicitly protect basic freedoms of Americans against government intrusion.

This tour brought Washington to Newport in August 1790. During his visit, Washington received an eloquent letter from Moses Seixas, the warden of Touro Synagogue. Seixas commended the President for his work and leadership in establishing a government that respected the inalienable rights of all citizens.

Washington's response embraced Seixas' simple, elegant phrases to renew his and the nation's commitment to Rhode Island's founding principle. Addressing a Congregation dedicated to religious liberty in a state based on this ideal, Washington reaffirmed religious freedom as essential to the new nation's identity.